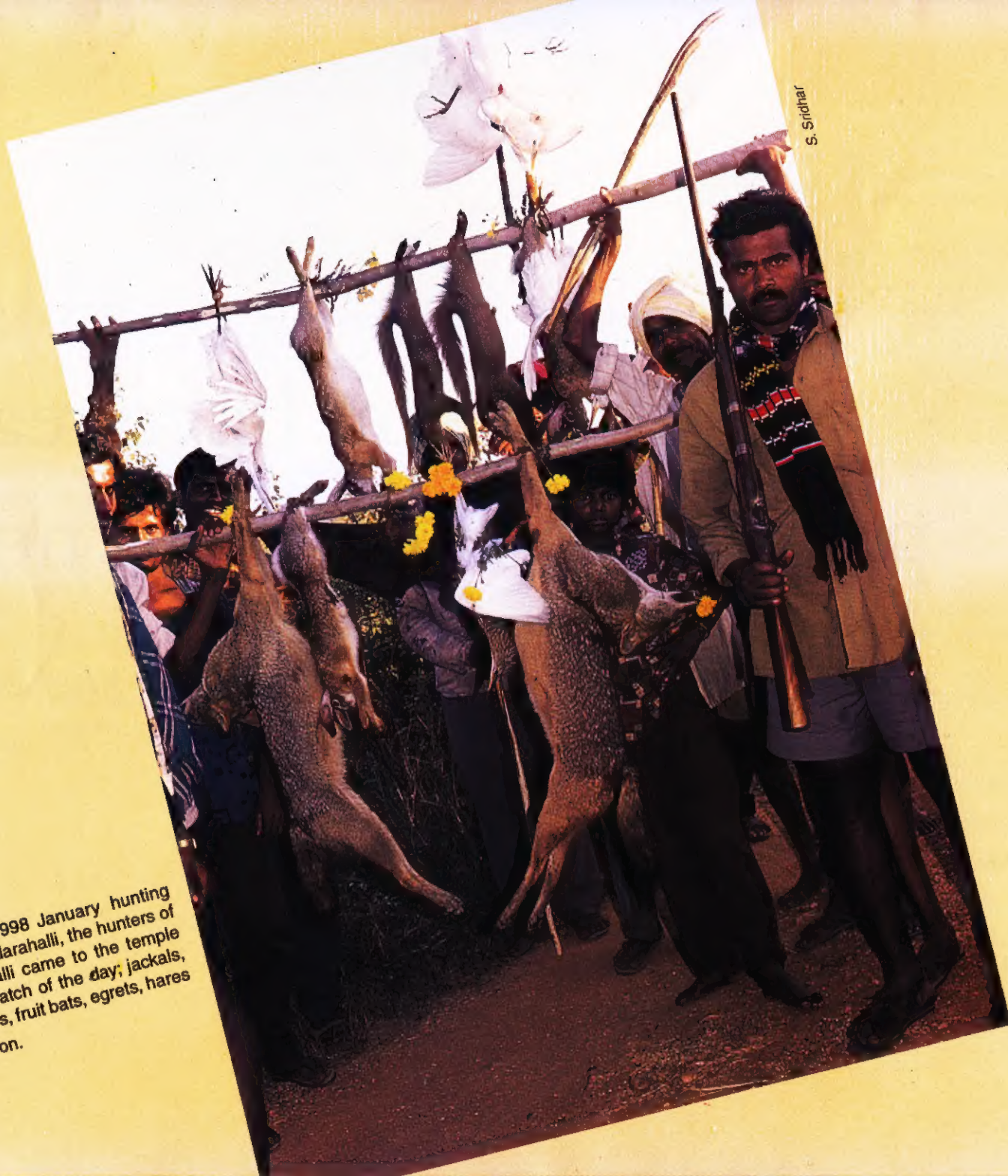


If you have tears,
prepare to shed them now.

— *William Shakespeare*

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During the 1998 January hunting ritual at Voddarahalli, the hunters of Ravutanahalli came to the temple with their catch of the day; jackals, mongooses, fruit bats, egrets, hares and a heron.



S. Sidhar



S. Sridhar

K.G. Lakkenahalli, hunters with their victims; blacknaped hares and a feral cat.



S. Sridhar

Children are also encouraged to participate in the rituals. The victims were fruit bat, coucal, egret, blackwinged kite, european marsh harrier, little brown dove and a tree pie.

While the 6th World Wilderness Congress is being held in Bangalore, the participants must be made aware of the ritualistic hunting of wild animals and birds in Bangalore District and the extraordinary cruelty to which they are subjected year after year without much protests from the citizens or action by the authority.

Cruelty Unlimited

In December and January shotguns, snares, nets, traps and clubs result in a living death to the unfortunate creatures such as jackals, hares, mongooses, bats, egrets, harriers, storks, etc., during the well organised annual festivities.

For instance, the hunters lure the jackals by howling calls imitating those of the animals and at the appropriate moment shoot them close to the heart with shots consisting of numerous rusted iron pellets. The animals still groaning with pain are tied to bamboo poles with their feet fastened to it. They are then taken in a procession to their last post - the Bettaraya Temple.

These festivals start in the afternoon and the place gradually turns into a hunter's pilgrimage center with groups of hunters returning with their catch of the day to the respective venues, to the accompaniment of drum beats and pipes.

It might also be noted that the breeding season of most of these animals coincide with the hunting season and this adds to the shame of the entire procedure. Young animals die a slow lingering death in their respective dens and burrows after their parents have been butchered.

Officials' Apathy

Despite irrefutable evidence and mounting pressure the authorities seem to be relaxed and excusing themselves under the pretext that it is more the job of another department than their own.

None of the forest dwelling animals and birds are safe from the hunters engaged in this annual barbarous festival. The jungles around Bangalore have become a constant battle ground for these gun trotters and are now infinitely poorer with the majority of the population of these hapless animals decimated, due to the profusion of the religious hunting over the years.

Liquidation of Langurs

A decade ago small troops of the common langur roamed in the jungles around Bangalore. But today these animals have been liquidated from a radius of at least 80 kms. from the city. The same is the fate with all other species not as visible as the langur. Only a few sporadic sightings of langurs have been reported from Mekedatu and Devarayanadurga forest areas in recent years.

Blistered Reputation

All wildlife lovers across the country agree that the reputation of Karnataka as a model state for conservation movement, is now undeniably blistered and flawed with several retrograde episodes happening in the recent past. The perpetual failure to nab Veerappan, who has killed over 2000 elephants for the ivory and still reigning terror in vast forest tracks; the chronic reluctance to curb large scale smuggling of timber from forests of Coorg and elsewhere, which has resulted in extensive denudation of our forests in the catchment areas; clandestine denotification of large areas of national parks; reluctance to ban mining and quarrying activities in around the sanctuaries and national parks; and supreme lethargy in containing the poaching activities in our forests, are some good examples of institutionalised incompetence.

Jettisoned Priorities

The wildlife board which is constituted by the government has done precious little to curb this practice of ritual hunting of wildlife. Sporadically meeting once in three years or so, with diluted agendas which have no practical implications what so ever, the board has more or less jettisoned the conservation priorities, leading to the homogenised destruction and systematic liquidation of wildlife in our forests.

Political Carnivores

It is believed that some political carnivores are behind this inaction for they want their vote banks to remain intact; a deplorable symptom indeed. The conservationists and animal lovers have been emotionally truncated by the turn of events.

Call for Action

The bleak irony is that if adequate steps are not taken immediately, comprehensive destruction of wildlife will be repeated on 7th January 1999 at Voddarahalli, after a night of frenzied killing on 6th January in the nearby forests and wetlands. This unlimited cruelty will be inflicted year after the year during December and January not only at Voddarahalli but also at other venues indicated in this brochure.

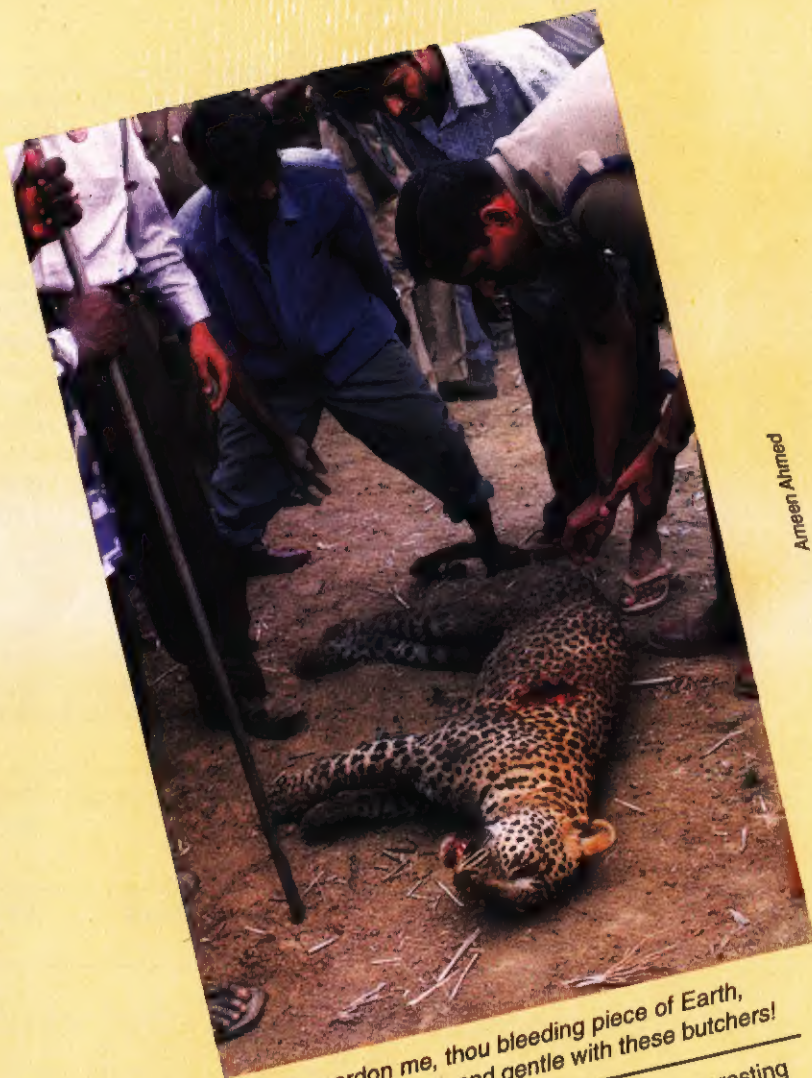
All wildlife lovers and indeed all civilized citizens must protest as strongly as they can against this continuing cruelty.

Please contact INCERT for your copy of a video cassette of the ritual hunting.

H.B. Papanna



The European white stork is a winter visitor. Unfortunately, its migration to Bangalore coincides with the ritual hunting season. In summer it receives red carpet welcome in Europe but red hot bullets in Bangalore.



O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of Earth,
that I am meek and gentle with these butchers!

A four year old male leopard was seen resting near a hut on the outskirts of Tumkur city on 27th June 1998. The residents raised a hue and cry and chased the leopard with iron rods and stones. The startled leopard fell into a shallow well, only to be mortally wounded by the villagers in hot pursuit.

Ameen Ahmed

This is not an isolated case. Over a dozen leopards have been killed in cold blood during 1996-97 in Hassan, Chickmagalur, Tumkur and Bangalore Districts. Another leopard was thoughtlessly ambushed in August 1997, at Lottegollanahalli within the city limits of Bangalore.



THE HUNTING TIME TABLE FOR DECEMBER 1998 AND JANUARY 1999 (These dates are tentative. Actual hunting dates will be known by the 1st week of December.)

Sl. No.	Date of Hunting	Hunting Venue & Hunting Name	Location of the Village
1.	6th December 1998	Sasalu village	near Arodi Village off. Dobspet - Doddaballapur Road.
2.	13th or 20th December 1998	Jaknahalli - Jaknahalli Jatre	off Tumkur Road
3.	17th or 24th December 1998	Bharge Bettahalli Hoge Bete or Smoke Hunting	on Tumkur Road - 40 Kms. from Bangalore.
4.	24th or 31st December 1998	Hulikunte Village Hulikunte Bete Jatre	on Dobspet - Doddaballapur Road, (16 kms from Dobspet)
5.	31st December '98 or 7th January '99	Soladevanahalli	off. Tumkur Road, near Hesaraghatta.
6.	7th or 14th January 1999	Voddarahalli Kolu Bete	off. Magadi Road, 18 kms from Bangalore

The doomsday is fast approaching. Those of you who are compassionate by nature, and want to prevent this ritual hunting, please contact the following. We look forward to your support in this noble endeavour.

Organisation	Contact Person	Phone No.
Institute for Natural Resources Conservation, Education Research & Training (INCERT) Seshadripuram, Bangalore - 560 020	Mr. S. Sridhar E-mail : <navbarat@blr.vsnl.net.in> <sreyes@mailcity.com> Mr. Paresh U. Karmarkar Mr A.N. Yellappa Reddy	3364142, 3364682 3489525 5721680
Beauty Without Cruelty Bangalore - 560 001.	Mr Marutesh Mr. Ranjit Konkar	6699061 5478891
People for Animals (PFA) Crescent Cross Road High Grounds, Bangalore - 1.	Ms. Aarathi Devaraj Ms. Aauna Bhartia	9624 244405 2204655 / 98440 23109
Compassion Unlimited Plus Action (CUPA), Unit-II, Hebbal Bangalore.	Ms. Suparna Ganguly Ms. Savitha Nagabhushan	2278678 6634410
Akhil Karnataka Prani Daya Sangha, Koramangala Bangalore - 560 034.	Mr. Uttam Chand Dugar	6648527 6653520
Wild Awareness Nature Club Tumkur.	Mr. Ameen Ahmed	0816-71643

Institute for Natural Resources Conservation, Education, Research & Training (INCERT)

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Prevention of Ritual Hunting of Wild Animals and Birds in Bangalore District

An Update (20.11.98)

A team of animal welfare NGO's led by INCERT, appraised the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and the Inspector General of Police (Food & Forests) about the practice of ritual hunting of wild animals and birds in Bangalore District and the need to take appropriate measures to prevent the ritual huntings planned during December - 1998 and January - 1999.

Accordingly, the PCCF (Wildlife) convened a meeting at Aranya Bhavan on 4.11.98 and appointed a team which included authorities from the Forest Department, Police Department, and representatives from INCERT, CUPA, PFA, BWC, SPCA and KPDS, to visit the fifty odd villages which are practicing the ritual hunting and to speak to the concerned villagers, their leaders and promoters of ritual hunting, the priests of the temples, the gram panchayat members and school teachers.

The team comprising of fifty members under the leadership of Sri. M.C. Narayan Gowda, Superintendent of Police, Bangalore Rural; Sri. Nagaraj Hampole, DCF, Bangalore Rural; Mr. K.S. Anand, DCF, Task Force, Circle Inspectors of the respective areas and the NGO's have already started visiting the villages. The team visited the villages in Susalu Hobli on 17th November, and the villages situated around Hulikunte on 18th November and the villages surrounding Jaknahalli & Soldevanahalli on 19th November 1998.

The villages around Voddarahalli on Magadi Road will be covered by the team during the second phase of the field campaign starting 26th November 1998.

The Forest Department has printed pamphlets for hand distribution and posters for pasting at vantage points around these villages. The pamphlets contain the information that the ritual hunting of animals and birds is illegal and against law and would entail punishment upto 6 (six) years if convicted or fine upto Rs. 25,000/- or both. The pamphlet also contains the information about the ecological and the beneficial roles of these wild animals and birds in biocontrol of rodents, insect pests, pollination, seed dispersal etc., and how depletion of wildlife has aggravated the problems. The pamphlets and posters clearly mention that there is no opposition to the celebration of the Jatra as such, but hunting of animals and birds is illegal.

The initial response to this field campaign has been overwhelming. It is hoped that wisdom will prevail among the ritual hunters and the practice will come to an end sooner than later.

We look forward to your support in this noble endeavour.